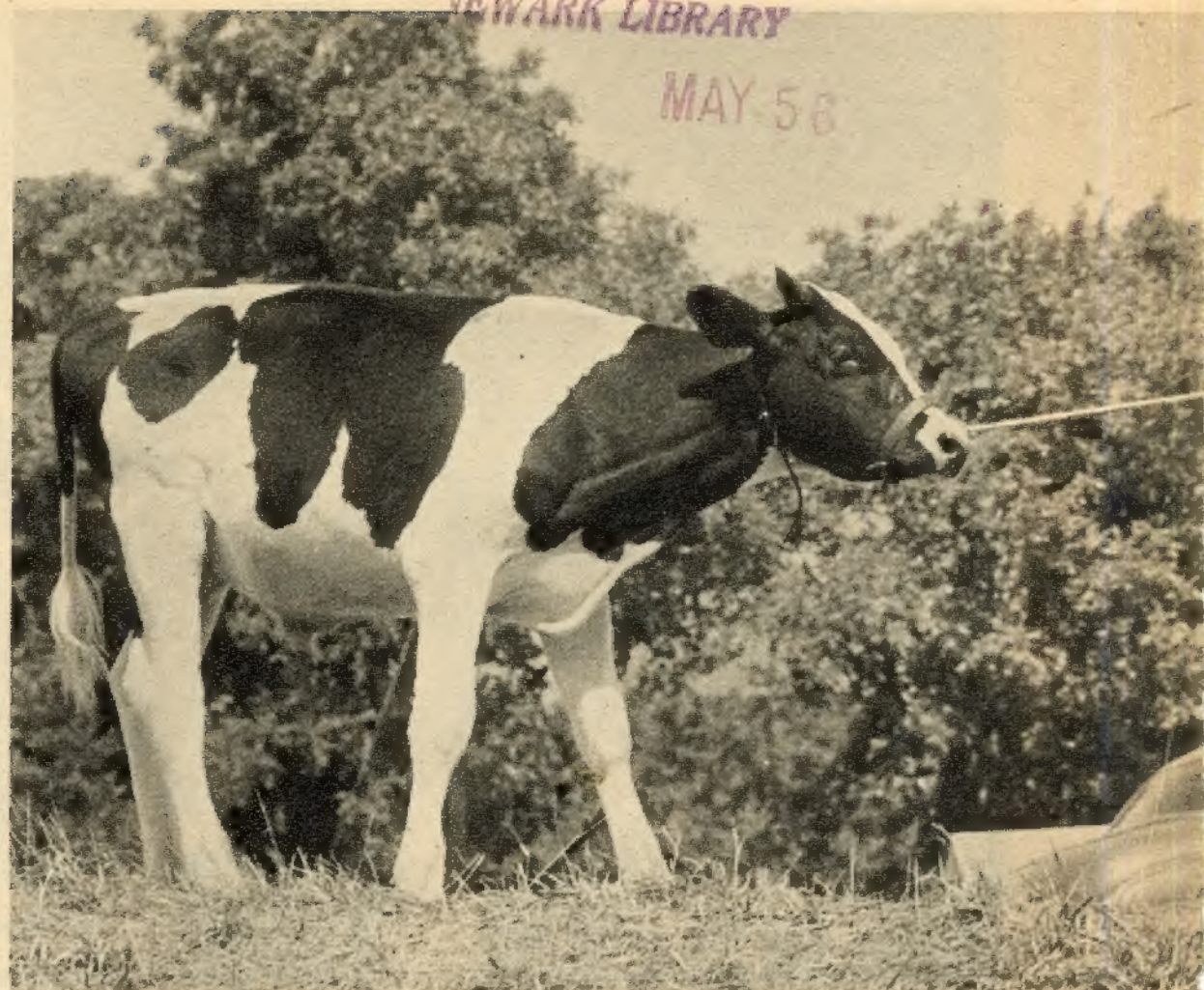


THE GARDEN STATE

YOUTH on the FARM



Like other 4-H members, James Lovell of Plainsboro has own flock and here he inspects a White Leghorn hen during culling session.



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State's Future Farmers of America and 4-H (Head, Heart, Hand, Health) Clubs Are Two of the Guiding Forces Behind Move to Keep Jacks and Jills on Farm

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

HOW ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Paree? Night club singers who warbled that popular World War I ditty about the sociological problems plaguing a farm boy in his first contact with Paris unwittingly had put their voices behind a question that has fretted rural leaders for decades.

For that matter, how ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Okinawa, Korea or Formosa (although admittedly these pose somewhat less of a problem than Paris)? Or, to keep from being completely warlike about the whole thing, how ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've come to realize they can make far more money in the city with far less effort?

Obviously many boys and girls must dedicate themselves to agriculture—particularly in such a state as New Jersey, where a recent survey showed the average farm owner to be almost 52 years of age. Unless many of today's teen-agers decide they'll till the soil and tend the barns and chicken houses, the future for farming in the Garden State must be considered bleak. That means farm youth must recognize that rural existence offers both opportunity and importance.

Keeping all farm boys and girls "to home" is not only an impossibility; in New Jersey it would mean an embarrassment of riches—there just aren't that many farms. Thus, in the Garden State, the question is: How are you going to keep the RIGHT boys and girls down on the farm?

That doesn't mean "right" solely from the standpoint of brains or brawn or high standards. Rather, it also means "right" from the standpoint of adaptability and inclination. It means an inborn enthusiasm for livestock and for the soil that can override long work hours, the vicissitudes of nature and the fickleness of the non-agricultural public.

CLOSE at hand are shining guides for New Jersey farm boys and girls—in skilfully organized groups such as the 4-H clubs and the Future Farmers of America; in financial help, such as the New Jersey Junior Breeders' Fund. Even more important, there is a solid home foundation of sympathy and understanding of farm youth; today's New Jersey farm fathers and mothers in most instances found their rural philosophies in 4-H clubs or the Future Farmers of America.

New Jersey's farm boys and girls

This is the nineteenth in a series of articles on New Jersey's highly diversified agriculture, vigorous and growing despite the constant inroads of industrial and residential development. Next week: The Farmer Today.



Recalcitrant Holstein is "coaxed" into prize ring at Branchville fair by a young exhibitor. RIGHT: a group of FFAers vie in egg grading contest at Atlantic City farm show.



can scarcely be called underprivileged in this year of 1955. While their youth programs may lack some of the intense organization and elaborate accoutrements of many urban programs, there is reason to say that no segment of teen-age society has more purposeful leadership than rural boys and girls.

MANY can remember when a boy or a girl was something to be seen and not heard about the farm—not much more than an extra hired hand (without pay). Many a city businessman might trace his present urban position to the long-ago bitterness of pre-dawn chores and sun-up-to-sun-down summer labor—no matter how much the passing years may glamorize those bucolic boyhood days. Fifty years ago 9 of 10 rural boys and girls couldn't wait to leave the farm.

That's not idle conjecture. The rising tide of youthful bitterness began to swell on New Jersey farms after 1875, when the state's big-city industries started to hold forth the lure of solid wages (and all day Sunday free of milking or egg-gathering). Poets and farmboys-turned-big-businessmen could rhapsodize all they wanted about farm life. As for boys and girls, they wanted out.

An educator named Earl Barnes made some startling and widely quoted discoveries in New Jersey's rural schools in the 1890s. He found in a survey of schools in two agricultural counties that at 7 years of age 25 per cent of all boys and girls hoped for rural occupation. However, of those 14 years old, only 2 per cent—1 in 50—desired a farm career.

By 14 a boy or girl had learned the hard facts of the back-breaking, wearying farm life of the Gay '90s. Their

adolescent touchiness told them they were different from town boys and girls; they were rubes—badly dressed, uncouth, poorly educated and just plain poor. The much-glorified little one-room schools did little to help their morale—scholars learned their readin' in terms of big-city heroes, their writin' the way grand city ladies practiced it and their 'rithmetic in problems of more interest to city bankers than to farm youngsters.

BETWEEN 1900 and 1910 many prominent minds began to worry about farms in general and farm youth in particular. President Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life Commission Report focused attention on rural backwardness in America. Many educators recognized that rural schools were both inadequate and in no way related to rural living. The drift of farm boys and girls to the city had become too marked to be ignored.

At the same time the nation also began to be disturbed about all adolescents, and from that concern was born much of our modern youth work—such as the Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts and Camp Fire Girls. Most important, from a rural standpoint, the seeds of 4-H clubs also dropped into this receptive soil.

Technically, formalized 4-H club work didn't start until the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. Actually, the work had started years before. As early as 1893, for example, a speaker had spoken about the "3-H's"—Head, Heart and Hand. By 1911 the familiar four-leaf clover insignia had appeared, bearing 4 H's, with Health added to Head, Heart and Hand.

New Jersey's official 4-H Club beginning is listed as June 1, 1915, a

decidedly slow getaway. Yet, when Henry W. Gilbertson started the state's first agricultural extension service in Sussex County in 1912 he immediately launched boys' and girls' work as a vital part of his up-state activity. His boys tested seed corn in rag doll testers and his girls raised tomatoes and canned what they couldn't sell to the Lackawanna Railroad dining car service.

THE Smith-Lever Act gave 4-H Club work a solid financial footing, but it took World War I to give the clubs a practical purpose. New Jersey's 4-H members had been drifting along

pleasantly until the war. Then, spurred by the nation's need to eat, boys raised pigs, cattle and poultry for food and planted extensive vegetable gardens. Girls stepped up canning programs. Clubs began hitting on all four H's.

New Jersey took its first summary look at 4-H clubs in 1930, when eight counties had full-time club agents. More than 8,000 farm boys and girls took part in the agriculture and home-making clubs and even the oldsters had to agree that 4-H clubs had benefited all concerned.

It's not stretching a point too much
(Continued on Following Page)



Dorothea Pool of Stillwater and Nancy Danley of Newton, members of Handi-Hi, a 4-H club in Stillwater, readying county fair exhibit

JERSEY FARM YOUTH

(Continued From Preceding Page)

to say that 4-H Club work between 1915 and 1930 perhaps affected the oldsters more than the youngsters. Many old-time farmers stubbornly resisted science, but their children didn't. As boys grew taller corn and better vegetables than their fathers it became common for old-time farmers to ask their county agents for seed or fertilizer—then add casually, "like the boy uses."

A 1928 study of 96 New Jersey 4-H clubs showed an eye-opening fact. Dairy cattle owned by boys in those 96 clubs averaged 11,655 pounds of milk and 457.1 pounds of butterfat for a full year. That didn't mean much to city folks but it sure amazed adult dairy farmers because the yields of those boy-owned cows were more than twice as large as the production of the average cow in the state!

CLUB work bridged the gap between classroom and farm at the turn of the century. It induced farmers to take a greater interest in their schools and at least indirectly led to vocational education. Passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 made vocational education—including vocational agriculture—an actuality on a national scale. Again, however, New Jersey's vocational agriculture program preceded the national legislation.

Atlantic County had established vocational courses in agriculture in 1913 at Egg Harbor and Minotola (the courses are still given in both towns, incidentally, after 42 years). Smith and Hughes combined, nevertheless, to give all vocational education a boost with their act and its accompanying funds.

Naturally vocational agriculture in the public schools had a close tie-in with the College of Agriculture at Rutgers. The state supervisor of Vo-Ag (as the program quickly became nicknamed) trained agriculture teachers at the college. In 1922 Prof. H. O. Sampson, appointed supervisor in 1918, moved into a suite of offices at the college and set about making field roots as important as Greek roots or square roots.

VOCATIONAL agriculture ran into snags. For one thing, a majority of farm boys didn't even go to high school in 1917. For another, teachers had few, if any, agriculture textbooks or even good reference sources for the secondary level. Accordingly, there was no chance to assign homework and from the start Vo-Ag courses ran two consecutive periods where material could be assembled and studied. High school administrators didn't particularly relish that; it wreaked havoc with their best laid classroom plans.

New Jersey's first Vo-Ag graduates left high school in 1921 far better fitted for farm work than any high school graduates before them had ever been. Still they felt a certain uneasiness about their status in high school, agreed that a state-wide organization of Vo-Ag students might help give vocational agriculture more stat-

ure among the devotees of the classics and square roots.

Accordingly, several schools sent representatives to a statewide all-day Vo-Ag contest at Rutgers in 1923. After the games and fun the boys got serious and organized the Young Farmers' Assn. of New Jersey. A year later they published a Vo-Ag paper, "The Future Farmer." Simultaneously the Young Farmers learned that similar movements had stirred in other states.

YOUNG FARMERS are as gregarious as Young Businessmen or Young Anything-Else. The next logical step was national organization, at Kansas City in 1928 when the Future Farmers of America (FFA) came into being. Many states, including New Jersey, claimed credit for originating FFA. There must have been some agreement with the Jersey claim; at any rate, Leslie Applegate of Freehold was elected the first national president of Future Farmers of America. Today, Applegate is a prominent Monmouth County fruit grower, by the way.

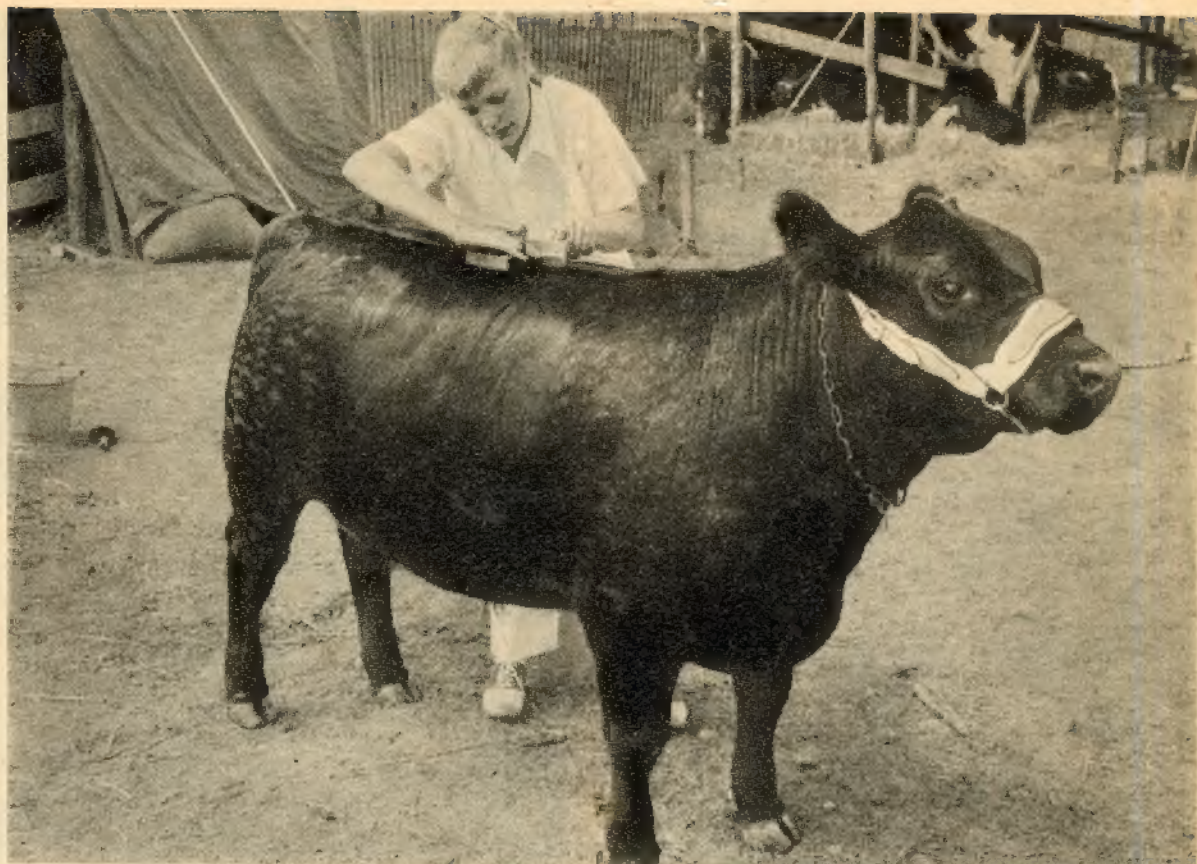
Some wondered if FFA and 4-H might clash, since membership had to come from the same rural source. No such clash occurred because the two groups meshed nicely. Most Future Farmers started as 4-H Clubbers; Future Farmers of America gave a solid vocational base to the vocational exploration of the 4-H work. As often as not a farm boy remained in 4-H work even as he pursued the much more intensive FFA trail.

The whole pattern of rural youth work had become clear by 1930 and as FFA and 4-H work complemented one another the progress of farm boys and girls gave sharpened perspective to the unique New Jersey Junior Breeders' Fund administered by the State Department of Agriculture. Time after time a farm boy autobiography might well start:

"I joined 4-H when I became 10. Then I bought a purebred Holstein with a loan from Junior Breeders' Fund. I took up vocational agriculture in high school and joined the FFA . . ."

JUNIOR BREEDERS' FUND are key words. Sen. Joseph S. Frelinghuysen, president of the State Board of Agriculture from 1916 to 1928, recognized the crying need to get deserving farm youngsters off to a start in the livestock field. In 1921 he donated \$10,000 to establish a fund from which loans were to be made—without collateral—to farm boys or girls who wished to buy purebred animals. His friend, Passaic woolens manufacturer Julius Forstmann, added \$20,000.

The Frelinghuysen idea has flowered handsomely. The \$30,000 principal is still intact, and in 33 years nearly 3,500 boys and girls have borrowed more than \$300,000 for purebred dairy or beef cattle, poultry and swine. Numerous New Jersey livestock farmers trace their beginnings to the Junior Breeders' Fund and some of the state's entire purebred herds have descended from a \$200



Frances Radcliffe of Lafayette, Sussex County "Steak, Ham and Chop Club" member, grooming her farm fair entry bearing name of "3-D." BELOW: Farm-garden show director Phil Alampi, shown with wife Ruth, is a former South Jersey FFA member. He also organized Gloucester County's first 4-H club and taught Vo-Ag in Woodstown.



loan to a needy and worthy 10-year-old boy.

Encouraged by ever-improving recognition of the importance of farm youth, aided by loans from Junior Breeders, tutored in Vo-Ag, led by enthusiastic adults in 4-H clubs and FFA, New Jersey's rural boys and girls grew rich in spirit and knowledge even during the depression and during World War II.

Four-H Clubbers dramatized their work during World War II around the slogan "Feed a Fighter," and a 4-H boy could do just that in a year by raising 500 broilers or four nine-month-old steers or producing 2,500 quarts of milk. His sister could accomplish the feat of feeding a soldier by growing an acre of mixed vegetables or canning 829 pints of food. While few World War II soldiers can remember getting 500 broilers in a year or 2,500 quarts of milk, the program nevertheless kept 4-H enthusiasm high.

Meanwhile, of course, the lessons

learned much earlier in vocational agriculture and in FFA activity paid off in spades and then some during the war. New Jersey farmers, a high percentage of them one-time FFA or 4-H boys themselves, raised their harvests to new and unexpected highs. That generation, the first benefited from organized farm youth work, did itself proud.

Today, even in the face of the rapid urbanization of New Jersey, farm youth work is vigorous. Take 4-H clubs, for instance. There are now 5,000 boys and 6,000 girls in club work—a rise of 3,000 in the quarter century since 1930. Every county except Bergen, Union and Hudson has 4-H programs, carried out in 682 varied types of clubs.

A boy or girl may take first official interest in Head, Heart, Hand and Health at age 10 and may remain a member until age 25. Gathered together under volunteer leaders in clubs with names like Kan So (sew, that is), Rag Apple Cafeteers and



Three generations of 4-H members in Mercer County—Henry Schmidt, who joined club when it was the 3-H, son Carl and grandson Robert, who joined group last December. They are Ewing Township residents. **BELOW:** Paul S. Cooper of Sewell, best poultry boy of 1954, chats with E. Warren Gradotzke, his former instructor at Glassboro High.



countless Busy Bees, the 4-H boys and girls learn to sew, to cook, to can, to care for dairy animals or chickens or sheep or beef cattle. They pursue vegetable growing, forestry, tractor maintenance—whatever project they elect.

It's easy to understand that club projects follow local commercial agricultural overtones. Thus, dairy projects abound in the hills of Sussex, Warren and Hunterdon; sheep raising is popular in Hunterdon; vegetable raising is widespread both in the big vegetable counties like Cumberland, Monmouth and Gloucester, and in urban or semiurban regions. Regardless of the project the aim is improvement—"To make the best better," in the words of the club motto.

IS this vocational preparation, then? Is this the way to keep boys and girls down on the farm? Leaders of the 4-H program prefer to look upon what they are doing as vocational exploration.

"Lots of boys and girls decide on the basis of 4-H work that they want to stay on the farm," Rollyn P. Winters, state leader of 4-H Club extension work, agrees. But, he adds, "Club work also helps many decide they DON'T want to be farmers." That's important, too; but regardless of whether they stay on the farm or go off to a research lab a 4-H member can't help but be better for the experience.

Farm boys and girls are like everyone else; they don't mind making a dollar or two on a project. But that isn't the purpose of 4-H programs. Club work is planned to give every youngster a definite long-term responsibility, involving records and sticking to the end. Shows and exhibits at fairs are part of the picture, and everyone who tries wins some recognition, since judging is based not on one boy or girl competing against another but rather on each individual competing against a standard.

Already third-generation club mem-

bers are common. For that matter, one club, the Yardville Junior Dairy Club is 36 years old and its ranks include many distinguished New Jersey agriculture leaders of this day. Also for that matter one club agent, Joe Turpin of Mercer County, has held his post since 1919. So, youth is served by tradition, by experience, by enthusiasm.

VOCATIONAL agriculture is bigger than ever, too. Now more than 2,000 New Jersey boys are enrolled in farm classes in a total of 32 regular high school and five county vocational schools. Every county but Hudson, Somerset and Ocean has Vo-Ag programs.

Headed by Owen E. Kiser, state supervisor of agricultural education, the Vo-Ag program has 49 trained agricultural teachers in New Jersey schools. A cross-section of farm experience is taught—dairying, fruit, poultry, and so on—with strong emphasis on scientific agriculture and accurate record-keeping. Supplementing classroom work is the requirement that each boy must maintain a supervised farm program at home.

Future Farmers of America provides both a social outlet for Vo-Ag students and a youthful trade association atmosphere. Special emphasis is placed on recognizing above-the-average boys by moving them through a series of "degrees"—Greenhand, State Farmer and eventually the highest honor, American Farmer. Take a look at last year's two New Jersey American Farmers, if your philosophy leans toward the theme that all youth is headed straight for Hades.

First, consider 19-year-old Earl Snook of Sussex. He could report in 1954 that he grossed \$16,244 while in high school—and managed it so well that at the end of four years he had six cows and three heifers and a bank balance of \$2,916. Two years out of high school when he made American Farmer, Earl's assets totaled \$6,790, including seven cows and four heifers all his own. At age 19 young Mr. Snook definitely could not be called a juvenile delinquent.

Say the same for 20-year-old Earl Tindall of Mercersville, who reported total receipts of \$18,000 in high school, with profits of \$4,442. He owned five cows, six heifers and five acres of ground in his senior year. Three years out of high school, he had assets of \$10,772 and so much recognized solidity that a bank would lend him \$4,500 for machinery. In addition, Earl's father died while the boy was still in high school and Earl's work kept the farm intact—and he still found time to be a student leader at Princeton High School. What's all that talk about juvenile delinquents?

BOTH 4-H clubs and FFA point often with pride to present and past members. Snook and Tindall were both 4-H and FFA members. Then, just at random, consider 4-H member Carol Cahill of Lincoln Park, who in 1951 won widespread newspaper notices after she made a complete wardrobe for \$55.95. A big department store quickly hired her to be an adviser in its yard goods department,

proving that while 4-H doesn't always keep 'em down on the farm it does help 'em get started. Then, as every loyal FFAer knows, Phil Alampi, director of radio and television farm and garden programs for WRCA, once belonged to a south Jersey FFA group and taught vocational agriculture at Woodstown for 12 years before going network in 1946. Alampi has meaning for 4-H members too: he organized Gloucester County's first 4-H Club.

Individuals are important, but only as part of the larger program reaching out to some 12,000 New Jersey boys and girls every year. These farm kids amaze a boy from the city as they prepare a fine specimen of livestock for a 4-H show at a county fair or as they keep careful track of their FFA earnings and spendings. They impress hard-headed businessmen, too—how many 20-year-old city boys can borrow \$4,500 from their corner bank these days? Plenty of farm boys can.

Thanks to this work with the boys and girls, many want to stay on the farm. They have a definite stake in the future. They have know-how, they have livestock, they have their own cars, they often have bank balances; they always have enthusiasm. No longer are they rubes; no longer is their book learning inferior to that of their city cousin. Many of these young farmers go off to college, then come back to the barns and furrows.

But transition from late teens to farm adulthood is a major problem at the moment. Once it was said that all a young man needed to go in farming for himself was a horse, a plow and a broad back. Now he needs financial awareness, a knowledge of everything from scientific sowing to planned marketing. Above all, he needs capital.

BOTH Vo-Ag and 4-H leaders are seeking to bridge the gap between high school theory and established farming—the age, say, from 18 to 25. Vocational agriculture leaders are stepping up their adult education programs for young adults, 4-H programs reach out to help well beyond high school. New low interest lending programs are available to help the serious and already experienced young farmer get started, to help him get married and get his own acreage to his credit.

Since the average boy must get his initial farm training on his dad's farm, father-son relationships are a matter of continuing study. Particularly important is the matter of making the son who stays on the farm feel like a partner rather than a hired hand. Rutgers specialists are moving ahead in a program to help fathers and sons draw up working agreements—and are getting a cordial response from farmers sincerely eager to make sons happy and independent on the farm. It's important to the future of both dads and sons; it's important, too, for the future of America.

Look over the shining boy and girl faces at a county fair this summer. See the eagerness, the intelligence, the wonderment of 4-H and FFA youngsters. They're worth keeping down on the farm—and enough will stay, too, given the chance.